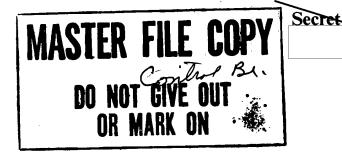
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Director of Central Intelligence





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Special National Intelligence Estimate

Spain: The NATO Referendum and US-Spanish Military Ties

Key Judgments

Secret-

SNIE 27.1-2-85 October 1985

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SNIE 27.1-2-85

SPAIN: THE NATO REFERENDUM AND USSPANISH MILITARY TIES KEY JUDGMENTS

The full text of this Estimate is being published separately with regular distribution.

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THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

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SCOPE NOTE

SNIE 27.1-85, Spain and the Western Security System, in March 1985 discussed potential problems in Spain's security relations with the West but argued that Prime Minister Gonzalez probably had the will and the ability to keep Spain in NATO and to contain leftist pressure for a significant reduction in the US military presence in Spain. The purpose of this Estimate is to assess Gonzalez's current views on and the prospects for a referendum on Spain's membership in NATO. It evaluates the principal options that remain open to him until Parliament begins its examination of Spanish foreign policy in late October. The paper closes by examining the effects that Gonzalez's referendum strategy and, more particularly, a referendum defeat could have on Spanish participation in the Western security system and on the US military presence in Spain.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

During the seven months since the publication of SNIE 27.1-85, Prime Minister Gonzalez has become increasingly committed to holding a referendum by spring 1986 on Spain's membership in NATO—a referendum he is likely to lose. Opinion polls indicate that public resistance to participation in the Alliance remains widespread, and Gonzalez and his advisers have still not come up with an effective strategy to overcome that opposition.

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Gonzalez, however, still has three options to back out of the referendum:

- His most promising escape hatch is to call an early national election—which he would probably win—and to fold the NATO issue into a vote on his government's overall program.
- He could take advantage of the constitutional prohibition against holding a referendum 90 days before or after a regional or national election; by instigating a crisis in one of the regional governments controlled by the Socialists, he could trigger a local election that would close the brief remaining opportunity for holding the referendum before next fall, when his four-year term ends and national elections must take place.
- He could slowly back away from the referendum by postponing it, claiming that the additional time would put him in a better position to negotiate a larger cutback in the US military presence.

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Time, however, is rapidly running out for Gonzalez. During the debate following his State of the Nation address to Parliament later this month, opposition politicians will press him to commit himself to a course of action. Any recommitment to the referendum at that time and in that highly formal and publicized setting would be difficult to back out of later

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If Gonzalez does go ahead with the referendum, his most likely strategy is to tie continued membership in NATO to a reduction in the US military presence in Spain, reaffirmation of Spain's nonnuclear strategy, and reiteration of his position—deliberately ambiguous in our view—that Madrid does not "need" to integrate militarily into the Alliance. In our view, such a strategy will not produce a referendum victory. But any US promises made in the course of the referendum

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campaign are likely simply to weaken Washington's opening bargaining position in the negotiations to renew the bilateral agreement, which expires in 1988.	25 X 1
No matter what the outcome of the referendum issue, Spain is likely to maintain its pro-Western course: the leaderships of all political parties except the Communists agree that Spain's security is best assured by active participation in Western defense efforts. And a referendum victory—though unlikely—would indicate the development of a more internationalist outlook in Spain's population as well. Even in the more likely event that Gonzalez lost the referendum, he would probably still keep Spain in NATO by resorting to the tactic he could have used to avoid that vote in the first place—calling a snap election and asking for endorsement of his overall political program, including continued Alliance participation. Regardless of the final vote, however, a referendum campaign would probably highlight the US military presence and almost assure that opposition to US basing privileges would increase. An outright referendum defeat, moreover, would energize Communists, neutralists, and anti-Western forces in Spain as they had never been before. As a result, the momentum toward greater Spanish participation in Western defense efforts that has marked Gonzalez's first years in power would slow and perhaps halt altogether over the next several years.	25X1
There is another view that differs significantly from certain of the preceding judgments. This view takes exception to those key judgments that suggest that Gonzalez still has options for backing out of the referendum, that if he holds the referendum he is likely to lose, but that if he loses it he is likely to keep Spain in NATO anyway. It is agreed that if the referendum were held today Gonzalez would lose it. But Gonzalez's statements in Washington and Bonn began the referendum campaign in earnest, and his ability to carry it off should not be underestimated, particularly because there is a reasonable chance the conservative opposition can be brought around to participate actively in favor of NATO membership. Consequently, this dissenting view holds that the referendum outcome—though not promising right now—is not foreordained and may remain in doubt until the voters go to the polls. Much depends on how the proposition on the ballot is worded, the subject of discussion in Madrid. Finally, should Gonzalez lose the referendum, this dissenting view believes Gonzalez will have great difficulty keeping Spain in NATO. And if Spain leaves NATO, our base	
rights will be in serious jeonardy	25 X 1

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1 The holder of this view is the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

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